

Church of God Sunday School

PAUL AND SILAS ARE IMPRISONED

Acts 15:32, 40-41; 16:9-40

Paul began his second missionary trip with Silas (a prophet of God who was recommended by the brethren). They traveled to many of the same churches Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. How wonderful it must have been to find that "the churches [were] established in the faith, and increased in number daily." But when Paul and Silas traveled to the "region of Galatia [*guh-LAY-shuh*]," they "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach."

One night Paul had a vision of a man pleading, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul believed the Lord was telling him to go to Macedonia and preach the Gospel. Paul and Silas left immediately. Soon they came to the city of Philippi, "which is the chief city of . . . Macedonia."



Paul and Silas "were in that city . . . certain days." What were they to do now? Remember, Paul had seen a vision of a man, but where were the people who wanted help? Also, there was no synagogue in Philippi,

which might have seemed like a good place to start looking. They had to wait for God to lead them.

On the Sabbath day, Paul and Silas "went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made." (It was usual for Jews to gather at a river for prayer.) As they were talking to the women who came there, they met Lydia, a woman who sold a very expensive purple dye (this was gathered drop by drop from a certain shellfish).

When Lydia heard what Paul and Silas had to say, the Lord opened her heart, and she believed. She and her household were baptized.



Lydia invited Paul and Silas to stay with her and her family, and they agreed.

As Paul and Silas were going to the place of prayer, a young woman began to follow them. She had "a spirit of divination." People believed that she could tell what was going to happen in the future. By her "soothsaying" (pretending to foretell the future), she made a lot of money for her masters.

As this young woman followed Paul and Silas, she cried out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This was true, but the devil, not God, was causing her to say this. This went on for many days.

Finally, Paul "turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The evil spirit came out. This was a miracle!

The young woman's owners were angry to see that their easy money-making scheme was gone. They grabbed Paul and Silas and took them to the magistrates (rulers of the city). They told lies about the disciples, angering the "multitude . . . against them." The magistrates commanded that Paul and Silas be beaten.



After they were beaten with "many stripes [blows from a whip]," Paul and Silas were cast "into the inner prison" (the most secure part). Their feet were put in stocks (heavy wooden frames that held the feet and/or hands). There was no way these two men could stand up or get away!

Can you imagine how Paul and Silas must have felt? Their backs were bleeding from the beating, they were thrown in prison, and their feet were held fast in stocks. What do you think they did? At midnight, they began to pray and sing praises to God.

The other prisoners heard Paul and Silas singing and giving God praise. The jailer probably heard them, and God certainly heard them! God knew Paul and Silas could have been complaining, but they weren't. God sent an earthquake, and "immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."

The earthquake opened the doors of all the prisoners—not just Paul and Silas. The jailer was about to kill himself, thinking everyone had escaped. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." The jailer ran to Paul and Silas. Falling down before them, he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Then they preached to the jailer and his household. After the jailer had cleaned their wounds, he and his household were baptized. Paul and Silas were taken to the jailer's home and fed. Everyone was rejoicing.

In the morning the disciples were released by the magistrates, who were afraid because they had ordered

the disciples to be beaten without a just cause. They asked Paul and Silas to leave the city. Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house first. When they saw the brethren, Paul and Silas told them all that had happened. After encouraging the brethren, Paul and Silas left.

Paul and Silas rejoiced (instead of complaining) in their trial, and the jailer and his entire household were saved. Does that mean they were happy to be beaten and thrown in jail? No! They rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his [Jesus'] name" (Acts 5:41).

When things go wrong, people might expect you to complain and cry. Giving God praise in the bad times might not be what they expect you to do. This is another way you can witness for Jesus.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"... they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."*

—Acts 5:41  
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Put the Pictures in Order

(write numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 beside each picture to put them in order)



___ Paul speaks to Lydia by the river



___ The prison doors open



___ The jailer wants to be saved



___ Paul and Silas are beaten

Fill in the Blanks From the Story



Lydia

On the Sabbath day, Paul and Silas went to the _____ . As they were talking to the women who came there, they met _____ , a woman who sold a very expensive purple dye obtained from _____ . Lydia and her _____ were _____ .

Lydia river household shellfish baptized

As Paul and Silas were going to the place of _____ , a young girl began to follow Paul. She had the spirit of _____ (fortune-telling), which supposedly enabled her to see the future. Finally, Paul said, "I _____ thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," and the evil spirit came _____ !



out divination prayer command



Paul and Silas were put in _____ , and their feet were put in stocks. At _____ , they started to pray and sing and praise God. He sent an _____ to undo their stocks and set them free! When the jailer learned that *not one* prisoner had run away, he ran to Paul and Silas and asked how he could be _____ . The jailer and his household were _____ .

baptized earthquake midnight saved jail